

TIPS TO TEACHERS

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BY

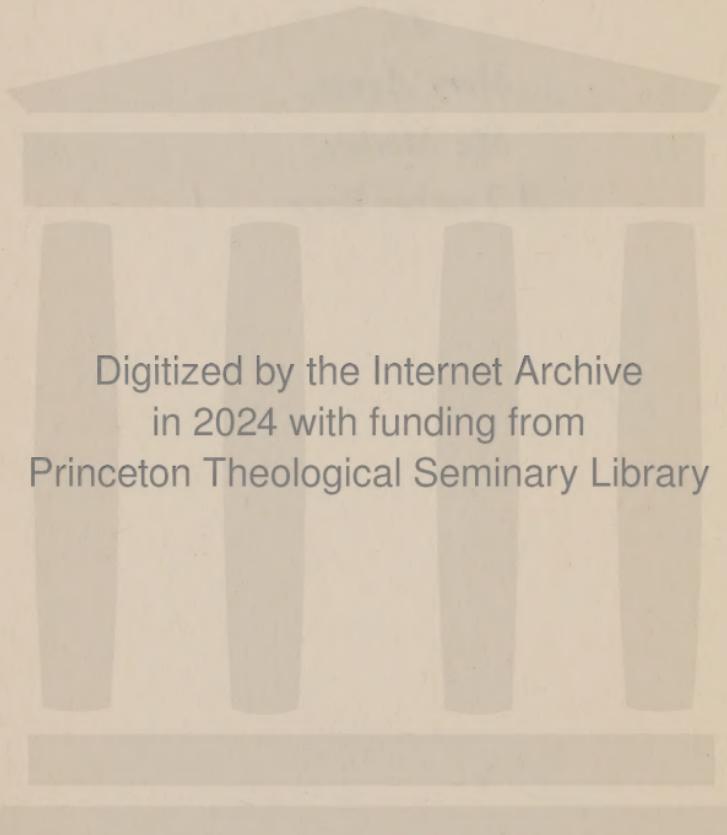
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*To
Mary Agnes,
My Mother,
A Teacher Born*



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TIPS TO TEACHERS

1

SELECTED FOR SERVICE

THE doorbell of Mr. Vinton's study rang. The minister moved quickly from his desk, switched on the porch light, and opened the door.

"Come right on in," he said to the three young women standing on the small porch. "Glad that all of you could come. Pick out the best chairs before the men arrive!"

"Oh, so we're going to have men in the party! How exciting!" exclaimed Jane.

"This is certainly a mysterious meeting," added Sue.

"We were trying to guess its purpose as we came along," confessed Dorothy. "But the presence of men rules out all our conjectures!"

All three laughed at this.

"The mystery will soon be solved," promised Mr. Vinton. "I'm relieved to see that two husbands were willing to take care of the children for this

evening so that you mothers could come. Dorothy doesn't have to worry about children." Dorothy, a close friend of the other two, was unmarried.

"Maybe if they had known that we were going to meet other men, even though chaperoned by you, it wouldn't have been so easy for us to get out alone!" Sue reminded him.

Just at this point the doorbell rang again. Mr. Vinton again moved quickly to the door and gave a hearty greeting to the two men who stepped in. When they saw the three women they drew back in mock confusion.

"This must be the wrong place, Frank," exclaimed Henry as he pretended to turn back toward the door.

"Excuse us, Mr. Vinton, for intruding!" echoed Frank who, like Dorothy, was unmarried.

"I believe you know one another," said Mr. Vinton with a smile. "This completes the party so the mystery of the meeting can soon be solved."

When he had finished speaking the five friends greeted one another, asking about children, husbands, or wives. Mr. Vinton sat for several minutes listening to the conversation to allow the group to become quite at home. Now and then he joined in

with some appropriate remark so that the invited guests might feel at home with him, too. He knew them quite well but not so well as they knew one another. He had been their minister for only a year. They had grown up together in the community. Finally, when there was a brief lull in the conversation, he broke in to state the business for the evening.

"I suppose you men are as curious about this meeting as the women confessed they were. Maybe before I answer the great question I should lock the door so that no one can escape! I asked you to come here in the hope of securing your help with the Church School. Our primary need is teachers. In my observation of the administration of the school during the past year, the greatest weakness is in the teaching staff. A number of the teachers have been teaching out of a sense of duty to your former minister and not out of a sense of mission. I am quite willing to grant their request to be relieved. This gives me an opportunity to secure some new teachers who will teach because they recognize work in the Church School as a rich opportunity to serve God rather than as a rather dull and confining duty."

Tips To Teachers

"Surely you aren't thinking of me as one of those new teachers, are you?" interrupted Frank.

"Nor of me?" echoed each of the others.

"I certainly am thinking of you five as the nucleus of a better-trained teaching staff in the Church School. The education of the children is the first charge on the members of a parish. We are told by those who ought to know that the teacher is ninety per cent of the educational program. I believe that from the bottom of my heart and shall continue to seek from among the members of this parish for the most capable persons to do the teaching. I consider such an effort to be my primary function as minister of this parish."

"I'm sure you are right about that," interrupted Sue, "but how did you select me for such an important job? I feel very much honored, of course, but—"

"I chose three of you because you are parents—you are accustomed to children, you understand them, you love them, your own children are in the school—you have a natural interest in making the school efficient. I chose Dorothy and Frank because on several occasions I have observed that children like them and that they are interested in children. I

chose all of you because I'm convinced that you can become the kind of teachers our school needs."

"Like Sue, I'm flattered," confessed Henry. "But I'm sure that I do not merit your confidence in me. In the first place, I have never taught a class. In the second place, I don't know enough. Mr. Vinton, you just can't realize how little I know about the Church! The parents of the children in any class I might essay to teach would mob me at the first opportunity!"

"My life would likewise be in danger!" agreed Frank. "I'm no better prepared than Henry."

Mr. Vinton was quite undisturbed by these objections. He had heard them all many times before. He knew from experience that if he could get these five to agree to try they would have a profitable experience and be a great help in the school. He had proved that many times before too.

"I'm willing to accept your plea that you are not fully prepared right now. But I have the utmost faith in your ability to prepare yourselves to do a good job. That's why I chose you—not because of your present fitness but because of the great possibilities of your future development. Every one of you can do a good job if you will agree to

undertake it. And there is no office within the gift of the Church which affords a greater opportunity to serve God and your fellow men. None! I don't believe that you have the right to refuse until you have actually failed after a conscientious trial!"

"That makes it almost impossible for us to refuse now," said Dorothy. "I, for one, am willing to try it, provided someone will give me some help in getting started."

"I am prepared to give that help," replied Mr. Vinton. "I do not intend to give you a teacher's manual, expecting you to go ahead on your own without any help. First, I shall ask you to meet with me once a week for a number of weeks for general instruction even before I give you your coursebook. After you start teaching, I shall expect you to meet with me now and then to discuss your class work."

"That about settles the argument in your favor, Mr. Vinton," acknowledged Henry. "I shall join Dorothy and make the attempt."

"That's fine. What about you others?"

"I'll agree to come for the instruction," replied Sue, "But I reserve my decision about taking a class till I know a little bit more about what's in-

volved. I have a husband as well as children to take into account."

"That's where I stand, too," affirmed Jane.

"Well, I have neither husband nor children," laughed Frank, "but I still have doubts about my ability to do a good job. I'll come to the meetings and do my best."

"This is all that anyone can ask," said Mr. Vinton with a happy smile. "I'm confident that at the end of our preliminary talks you will be willing to teach for one year. By the way, your contracts will read for just one year though I shall retain the privilege of hiring you for another year if I think it best for the school!"

"Do we start on our instruction tonight?" asked Dorothy.

"It will be best for us to settle only the preliminaries tonight," replied Mr. Vinton. "We have already made the most important decision—to go ahead with our preparation. Another question which must be decided, too, is the most convenient time for our future meetings and how many times you are willing to come. That will help me make my plans. What is the most convenient time of day or evening for you to come?"

This question brought on considerable discussion. As usual it was soon discovered that there was no time which was completely satisfactory to everyone. Mr. Vinton had made it plain that he would fit into any time the rest of the group selected. As a result they agreed on Tuesday evening from eight to nine. Another thing that Mr. Vinton had stressed—start on time, quit on time.

"Now how many Tuesdays are you willing to come?" he asked.

"How many times do you think it will be necessary for us to come?" Sue wanted to know. "After all, you know how much there is for us to learn. I suspect that you have done this very thing with people like us in your former parishes. How many times did they come?"

"Anywhere from eight to ten," he acknowledged. "I have generally been fortunate in my choice of candidates. Unless I completely misjudge you people I believe that we can do everything that is necessary to give you a successful *start* in ten meetings or less. Unquestionably, you will learn most effectively after you begin to teach and come to discuss your problems with me. In fact, that's when you will actually learn how to teach effec-

tively. You will really learn to teach by teaching. In our meetings together I shall simply try to give you a few good tips to make the learning a little easier and quicker for you. By the way, the first of the meetings will begin at eight next Tuesday evening—this is not one of them."

As he spoke he glanced at his wrist watch. This preliminary meeting had taken about forty-five minutes.

"Now for our first meeting," he continued, "I shall ask you to do some thinking. You can do this as you go about your work. Think back in your experience to something you learned and still remember—knitting, skating, cooking, drawing, painting, driving an automobile, playing golf. This is a fair list. Suppose each one selects one of these learning experiences and analyzes it carefully."

"I'll take cooking," said Sue.

"Driving an automobile for me," promised Henry.

"I know how to knit," said Dorothy.

"And I learned to skate just a couple of years ago," volunteered Jane.

"Well, I play golf, though I have never really

learned the game," acknowledged Frank. "But I think I can recall all the ways I've tried to learn."

"That list came out quite well for a guess," continued Mr. Vinton. "Now don't read a thing—just think. Then next Tuesday we'll all compare notes to discover whether we can find some very simple rules for this learning business. I think that we must first know how people learn before we can teach effectively. That is my first tip to teachers—*observe the laws of learning.*"

Though the five stayed for a while longer to talk, their conversation quickly passed from the subject of teaching. But as they discussed the experiences of the evening among themselves on the way to their homes all of them gave expression to considerable doubt regarding their ability and their real desire to teach. Jane expressed the feelings of the whole group when she said, "Mr. Vinton has a job on his hands to convince me that I belong on the teaching staff in the Church School. But I'll co-operate with him as best I can."

2

THE ALL-IMPORTANT DESIRE

THE next Tuesday evening, just a little before eight o'clock, the five teachers, or rather the five men and women whom Mr. Vinton hoped to develop into teachers, gathered in his study. He was delighted with their promptness and told them so. At eight he opened the period of instruction with a brief prayer.

"You will recall," he said, "that I asked you to do some thinking on how people learn. Each one of you agreed to think definitely about some learning experience you have had. Without further ado, let's have your reports. Who will begin?"

There was no immediate response to this question. Each one of the group was hoping that someone else would be the first to speak.

"Don't be afraid to speak up," urged Mr. Vinton. "You aren't being called upon to make an address over the radio!"

"Well, I suppose we men should lead the way!" ventured Henry. "I was to report on how I learned to drive an automobile. It was a long time ago that I first took the wheel and stepped on the starter but I'm still a learner. I think that practice plays a large part in learning to drive. But first of all I *wanted* to learn—I had wanted to learn from the time I used to watch my father drive us around with such great ease. I knew how to ride and steer a bicycle—driving an automobile appeared to be the next step toward manhood. But even though I had watched my father drive I discovered, before I finally learned well enough to drive alone, that he had a lot of things to tell me."

"That's a very good analysis—very good," said Mr. Vinton. "Very simply and briefly stated. Practice, the desire to learn first, watching your father, relating the new learning to an old skill of bicycle riding, and finally getting important pointers from your father and others. Very good!"

"I had something of the same experience in learning to skate," confessed Jane. "Though that experience took place only a couple years ago, I had a time trying to analyze it. I'm sure that I wanted to learn first of all—I can't otherwise see how any

sensible person would stand for all the falls I had. Practice played a big part. I'm sure, too, that I must have watched others long before I tried myself—maybe that was what made me want to learn, the desire to be able to do what others were doing. Yes, come to think of it, my brother gave me some pointers."

"Was there any other skill which helped you?" asked Mr. Vinton.

"I can't recall any except, possibly, sliding on the smooth ice on my shoes," replied Jane. "Sometimes it's difficult just to walk on smooth ice without falling. But I don't claim that that helped me to learn to skate."

"In learning to play golf," interrupted Frank, "I have been helped most by being shown the best way to drive or approach or putt. I've learned much by watching others. I seem to get worse with practice—then all of a sudden I show signs of real improvement—then I level off again. At present, I think that I have become as skilful as is possible for me."

"What keeps you at it?" asked Mr. Vinton. "You sound rather pessimistic about your future!"

"I want to learn because I like to be with my friends."

"Then it must be a real desire to learn which keeps you at it."

Sue and Dorothy made similar reports concerning learning how to cook and knit. After they had briefly analyzed their experiences, Mr. Vinton summed up all the reports.

"What you have reported confirms me in my belief that there are at least five important factors in learning. Sometimes these are stated as laws. For me that makes the matter too formal. I prefer to think of these laws in the simple terms used by Henry. Our own experience shows that people learn most easily and quickly when they really want to learn. Practice is an important factor. It is easier to learn if some previously acquired skill can be used. Then, watching someone else do what we want to do—and the better he does it the easier it is for us to gain the skill. We need someone who can give us pointers. Well, now let's test this out on other kinds of learnings. Jane, in what subject did you make the best grades in school?"

"I like history. It was my best subject. I still remember much of what I learned."

"One reason, then, why you learned easily and rather permanently was that you liked the subject—you desired to learn."

"Yes, and I read a lot on the side, including historical novels."

"In a sense, that was watching someone else—research on your own account—and calling upon the previously acquired skill of reading."

"Then I worked hard for tests and took an active part in the class sessions."

"That was your practice."

"In most cases, my teachers and the textbooks gave me plenty of facts."

"You learned history then because you unconsciously observed several of the most important laws of learning. It's true that we have had to use rather liberal interpretations in some cases to discover this. I think we may say, however, that your experience is proof of the correctness of our analysis of the learning process."

"But suppose we take something like learning to pray—a very important part of the Christian life," said Sue. "Do we learn to do that according to the same laws?"

"That's a fair question," replied Mr. Vinton. "I

suppose we begin to pray because we have seen or heard our parents or friends praying. We have heard them say how much they have been helped by prayer. This has made us want to pray. Then perhaps we have been confronted by some distressing experience. We have felt the need of someone like God to help us see it through. As a result we have prayed heartily. The oftener we have recognized our need the more we have prayed. The oftener we have prayed the better we have learned to pray. During the years we have probably heard sermons on the value of prayer, or read books about prayer. Unconsciously, we have followed the laws of learning."

"We learn to be Christians in the same way," volunteered Dorothy. "We want to be like our parents or our Christian friends. We try to learn from them and from the Church what it means to be a Christian. Then we try in little ways, gradually taking longer steps and finding increasing opportunities to practice our religion."

"What has impressed me as we have been talking," asserted Jane, "is the fundamental role of the desire to learn. In our various attempts to analyze

the learning experiences it has been evident that the desire to learn must always be present."

"Good for you," cried Mr. Vinton. "I'm glad that you are discovering these fundamentals instead of having me tell you of them. Another tip I have for you: *spend all the time necessary to get the pupil to the point where he is anxious to learn.* The teacher who accomplishes this has won more than half the battle."

"If that's the case, then we must learn first of all how to get people to the point where they really want to learn," asserted Jane. "It seems to me that we ought to think a lot about that."

"Yes, we should. In order to make our teaching effective we certainly must secure the initial interest of the pupil. When I was a boy I had my own riding pony. I soon discovered that I could lead him to a watering-trough but could not make him drink unless he was thirsty."

"Maybe that's why," interrupted Dorothy, "I have learned so little of the many subjects I have studied in all my school days. Like your pony and the water, I didn't want those subjects at the time they were put before me!"

"That's probably true," continued Mr. Vinton.

"Be sure to keep it in mind when you try to reach children. Make every effort to appeal to the children's natural and ever-present wants which the learning will supply."

"What do you mean?" asked Henry.

"Children particularly have great curiosity. If in any way you can appeal to their curiosity they will learn quickly and easily. They are great imitators of people they like. If you can show them that what you want them to learn will make them more like the persons they admire, your teaching will be effective."

"I now remember how hard I worked one time to learn a poem," acknowledged Sue. "I wanted to receive a pat on the back from the teacher I liked."

"That's right," commented Mr. Vinton. "We all want recognition. We'll work hard to get it. Some children will work like bees to get to the head of a class in school or to excel in sports. Others will work just as hard simply because they feel the urge to give and develop their best."

"Yes, and some people are willing to make an effort to learn," said Sue, "because they think that the learning will give them a secure place among their friends or in the community."

"I think, too," interrupted Frank, "that many people desire to learn because they realize that a certain skill will help them accomplish their tasks more quickly and easily."

"That's another good point," acknowledged Mr. Vinton. "I'm sure now that you recognize the natural, ever-present wants which drive people to learn. It is doubtful whether any one child will be actuated by all of them, but every child has some want to which a teacher can appeal. It is for us to discover the most urgent want and appeal to it. Whenever we do that, we will get a learning response."

"You know I'm getting very much interested in this teaching business," confessed Henry. "I can use this right in my own home. But more than that—it will be a lot of fun trying to get other people's children to eat the spinach they don't think they want!"

Everyone laughed, not because what Henry said was funny, but because it was such a good illustration of what they had been talking about. Henry had been caught in the very net he was anxious to cast about his own children and those of others.

They laughed, too, because they realized they were just about caught, too.

"This," said Mr. Vinton, "is a good place to stop this evening. We have a few minutes left out of our hour but we wouldn't have time to deal effectively with one of the other factors in learning we have discovered. During the week try to verify the results of the discussion this evening in your own experience and in what you observe in the experience of others, especially where there are children in the home. You fathers and mothers might try some experiments with your children. Let's be thinking, also, of the five laws we have talked about at this meeting, and be prepared to go on from here."

The five friends lingered a few minutes longer to talk with one another about family and neighborhood affairs. As they walked out to their cars together, they admitted that they might be teachers in the Church School after all.

3

THINKING AND DOING

THE next Tuesday evening the group gathered for the second period of discussion. After they had greeted one another Mr. Vinton opened the meeting with a prayer. When they were comfortably seated he asked them to state their impressions of the first discussion. This provided a very complete review and brought them quickly to the point where they had left off at the first meeting.

"Now," said Mr. Vinton, "we can go right on as if a week had not intervened."

"We ought to do something like this when we teach a class, oughtn't we?" asked Dorothy. "The six days between Sundays must make it difficult for Church School children to recall what happened at the previous class meeting."

"The kind of review we had takes time," replied Mr. Vinton, "but it clinches the learning very considerably. I am sure that it is a good use of time."

"All this talk about what we did at our first meeting," interrupted Frank, "has brought something home to me very clearly. This: *learning depends so very much upon the co-operation of the learners themselves.* The desire is theirs, they do the practicing and observing, and the past experience they call upon is their own. All that teachers appear to be needed for is to give information."

"I'm glad you have called attention to that, Frank," said Mr. Vinton, "but let's not jump to the conclusion that since so much depends upon the boys and girls the teacher is a very unimportant member of the class. On the contrary, it is the teacher who skilfully taps the natural urges underlying the desire to learn. But just the same, you have made an important discovery. In fact it is another of my tips: *people learn most through their own thinking and doing.* The successful teacher gives the pupils every opportunity to participate in the class work through a variety of activities which call for thinking and doing. This is simply stating a principle widely recognized in industry: the best executive is the one who is able to get the most capable people to share the work with him."

"In a sense, learning operates a self-service store, doesn't it?" asked Jane.

"That's a fine illustration!" exclaimed Mr. Vinton. "It is generally known as 'learning by doing.' "

"I've heard a lot about that," interrupted Sue, "but I'm not so sure about it. When our children were small they went to the most progressive school here. They did a lot of things—in fact they were so busy doing things that they learned very little. Now it is better since the people rose up and made the school authorities change their methods."

"That is a danger," acknowledged Mr. Vinton. "Some teachers set children to doing things just to keep them busy. When that happens I don't blame parents for rising up in wrath. But true learning activity is never busy work. That leads me to give you another tip: *all the activities you help children to plan must have a learning purpose.* If any activity doesn't help the children learn more easily and quickly, then it has no place in an educational program."

"Somehow I don't understand the distinction you make," confessed Dorothy. "What do you mean by *busy work* and *learning purpose?*"

"There was a teacher in our school last year who

prepared a number of mimeographed outlines of pictures. After she had told the story and the children were showing signs of restlessness, she produced these outlines and some crayons and set the children to coloring the pictures. They didn't learn anything more by coloring the pictures. The coloring was just an outlet for their restlessness. That was really 'busy work.' If she had given each child a blank sheet of paper and some crayons and asked each one to illustrate the story, the picture-making would have been an activity with a learning purpose."

"Now I understand what you mean," said Dorothy, "but I can't see how children would have the ability to illustrate a story. That's a job for an artist. Wouldn't the illustrations be so terrible as to spoil the story?"

"I can answer that one," interrupted Jane. "My little daughter used to bring pictures like that home from school. When I saw them I really thought they were awful but when she explained them to me they became things of subtle art which told an interesting story. For my daughter they told the complete story."

"That's it," chimed in Mr. Vinton enthusiasti-

cally. "That's a much better answer than I could have given because it came right out of Jane's experience. That is activity with a purpose."

For a few minutes no one spoke. Even Mr. Vinton appeared to be lost in thought. Then, when the silence began to be somewhat noticeable, he continued,

"I was just thinking how much activities differ in value. Some kinds of activity are better than others because they lend themselves to various approaches. Thus they may cater to the interests of a larger percentage of the class. It is difficult to find an activity which appeals to every member of the class."

"Then I suppose the thing for us to try to do," interrupted Frank, "is to find activities with many approaches. I'm sure that you have an illustration in mind, Mr. Vinton."

"The simplest illustration is one of the activities we used so much when I was a boy—making maps. There are many things to do in making a map: drawing the outline, coloring different sections, printing in the names of countries and cities, mounting, gathering statistics. If it is to be a relief map, then there is the mixing of the materials for

molding and the molding itself. One person likes to do one of these things, another another, and so on."

"I can see how the selection of that kind of activity," confessed Henry, "will catch the interest of the whole class. But maps are not needed in many Church School classes, are they?"

"That's very true, but when a map can be used, the making of it will generally appeal. Another kind of activity which has a wide appeal is a game. People of all ages like to play games."

"I don't see how games can be used in the Church School," objected Sue. "Wouldn't the children soon get out of hand and disturb everyone else?"

"Not if you chose your games wisely. There are a lot of quiet card games like 'Authors' or games in which sides are chosen like 'Bible Baseball.' If you will think back over the games you used to play at parties or find out what games are being used in public school classes, you will discover many that are usable. Already some Church School units suggest many game activities. One clergyman prepared a series of courses for the whole Church School based on the 'Authors' principle. But that was running the idea into the ground."

"Children certainly like to play games," said Jane. "If we could capitalize on that, teaching would be much easier."

"Maybe a course should suggest different games for different times in the year," interrupted Dorothy, "something to correspond to football in the fall, hockey or basketball during the winter and baseball in the spring!"

"Say, that's an idea!" exclaimed Mr. Vinton. "That's worth exploring. When you start to teach, Dorothy, keep that in mind and let us know what you discover. Maybe such a variety of games would keep the course from getting monotonous."

As he said this Mr. Vinton looked at his watch. He was somewhat taken aback when he noted that all but ten minutes of the hour had elapsed.

"Before you go, I wish to call your attention to other kinds of purposeful activities you may find useful," he continued. "Classes can make things like model churches. They can search for information in books you bring to class or list for them. Group discussion is a fine class activity as we have discovered at our meetings. Individuals may write poems related to the course or the whole class may

make up a suitable prayer. A class may examine a flat picture for its story and artistic skill."

"I should think that pictures would be very helpful in teaching," interrupted Jean. "The Chinese, I believe, say that one picture is worth a thousand words."

"And not only flat pictures," continued Mr. Vinton. "These days much can be accomplished through the viewing of slides and motion pictures. I wish there were more first-class ones. Probably there soon will be, since the Church is gradually waking up to their usefulness."

"Motion pictures are much like plays," asserted Dorothy. "We ought to be able to use all kinds of dramatics. I've always been interested in pageants."

"That's right," chimed in Henry. "Our children do a lot of that in school and in their play around the house. They play 'school' and 'church.'"

"Children like to take trips. We can use trips in our teaching—trips to museums, about the church building noting the windows and symbols and church furniture, to other churches, to church institutions. Probably all of us have also had to do memory work in our time—that's another activity, often abused but very useful."

"Memorize Bible verses and such like?" inquired Sue.

"In Church School I like to ask boys and girls to memorize things they will use in Church life—great passages from the Bible, prayers and parts of the worship which are used regularly, facts about the Bible or the Church which the intelligent Church member ought to know. And then, finally, there are experimental activities which may be very useful in your teaching."

"Do you mean activities in which you try things out?" asked Frank.

"Exactly. Your class works out a code for class conduct. Then they try it out for a period of weeks to discover its weak spots before recognizing it as the class code. It is just like the simple code I suggested at the first meeting—start on time, close on time—which is just one way of reminding you that I am keeping my word and calling your attention to the time for closing, three minutes away!"

"Well, all I can say is that it has been so interesting," confessed Jane, "that the hour has passed very quickly."

4

CENTER OF THE TARGET

THE next meeting of the group in Mr. Vinton's study started a few minutes late. Frank had telephoned that he was held up by a flat tire. Under such circumstances, Mr. Vinton generally went ahead with a meeting on the theory that he had an obligation to the others to begin and close on time. In this case, however, the others persuaded him to wait for Frank. All were agreed that they were quite willing to run a few minutes over the hour if necessary in order that Frank might be present for the full session. Frank had expected to be about fifteen minutes late, but received such prompt service from his garage man that he delayed the meeting only five minutes.

"Why didn't you go ahead without me?" he asked when he came in.

"We were having a good time waiting for you," replied Dorothy.

At this, Mr. Vinton prepared to open the session with prayer. After the prayer he spent a few minutes helping them recall what they had learned at the last session. When this careful review was finished, Mr. Vinton said, "I forgot to do something very important at the end of our last meeting—to give you an assignment for the week. And I wanted you to be thinking about the center of interest in your teaching."

"We certainly ought to know the answer to that question," asserted Henry.

"I'm glad you recognize its importance," continued Mr. Vinton. "There are two possible answers. At least, people have generally given two answers. And the advocate of each is sure that he is right and all the others wrong! I know I am!"

"When I went to school," said Sue, "the center of interest must have been the subjects we studied. Certainly that's what everyone was interested in, if that's what you mean by the *center of interest*."

"That's the only thing I ever heard about," asserted Henry. "The subject was the important thing. We had to pick our subjects carefully and pass them."

"Yes, the subject matter used to be the center

of interest," acknowledged Mr. Vinton. "Many people still think it should continue to be the center of interest. They insist that education is fundamentally the transmission of a body of knowledge. The theory is that when people hear the truth they absorb it and, knowing the truth, immediately act accordingly."

"I don't agree with that theory at all," affirmed Jane. "When I was going to school I heard a lot of things which had no effect whatsoever upon my actions."

"Yes, and I do a lot of things," confessed Dorothy, "which are quite at variance to what I know to be right. Today I almost got run down by an automobile because I insisted on crossing the street against the red light! I know the truth but don't always act on it."

"That's a good illustration," said Mr. Vinton. "I do the same thing at times. What's more, I know a lot of Christian truths. I know and believe that if I have sufficient faith I can do seemingly impossible things. I know and believe that, yet at times I act as if I didn't. People are moved to action by many different factors, one of which often is knowledge of truth. But many times people are moved by other

factors so powerful that they act contrary to their knowledge."

"Evidently the transmission of subject matter is not the true center of interest," said Frank. "But that doesn't mean that we can ignore subject matter altogether. We've got to have facts to go on. We learned at our first meeting that the giving of information was one of the five factors."

"That's quite true," acknowledged Mr. Vinton. "We need to be reminded that knowledge has its place—and an important place—in teaching and learning. But even that does not make it the *center* of interest. Here is another tip: *the true center of interest for teachers is the pupil.* The presence of a learner is the only valid reason for having an educational program."

"Now I remember something I heard at a PTA meeting some time ago," confessed Jane. "The speaker repeated several times that teachers are teaching children, not textbooks. He said that the teacher's first concern in education is to help the child meet his needs, not to pass on a body of knowledge, no matter how important it may appear to be. That struck me as being so odd that I wrote it down in my memory book! Now I understand

what he meant. Evidently that's what you mean, Mr. Vinton."

"Jane, that's the second time you have recalled something very helpful out of your past experience," affirmed Mr. Vinton. "Having that statement come from the outside is much better than my making it. We teachers are concerned with the learner. In order to make our teaching effective we must center our attention on him and seek first of all to understand him. When we get to understand him then we will be able to select the facts which will be most useful for him to learn."

"I suppose that means that we will have to know a lot of child psychology," said Dorothy.

This immediately brought visions of heavy reading in scientific books. While they were unhappily considering this prospect, Mr. Vinton remained discreetly silent. Finally, after some minutes of thought, he said, "The more we can read the better and I shall expect you to read one or two new books each year. I believe, however, that we can learn a lot just by careful observation. That's where the authors of books on child psychology got their information."

"We parents will have an advantage over Dor-

othy and Frank in this," claimed Sue. "We can keep a careful watch over our children."

"Yes, that does give you parents some advantage," confessed Frank, "but maybe you won't be as disinterested in your conclusions. Dorothy and I can be wholly scientific in our watching! In other words, don't feel too sorry for us! There are plenty of children for us to watch."

Everyone laughed. But all recognized the truth of what Frank had said. Unmarried people also have many opportunities to observe children.

"In order to understand a child," continued Mr. Vinton, "you have to take him where he is."

"What do you mean by that?" asked Jane.

"Too many people think in generalities. They think of all eight-year-old children as being alike. Eight-year-old children are as different from one another as their homes, their companions, their communities, and their abilities. The only way you can ever get to understand a person is to know what his experience has been."

"I never thought of that before," confessed Jane, "but it is certainly true. We are the product of our experiences to a great extent. I'm just now recalling a story I heard over the radio some time ago. It was

the story of a recklessly brave soldier who appeared to be trying to throw away his life. When his chaplain discovered that his girl had thrown him over just before he came overseas and that he was an orphan brought up by relatives who didn't care for him, it was easy to understand why he was reckless with that life for which no one else appeared to care."

"What a person knows at any one time may be only superficially a part of him," said Mr. Vinton. "It may be quickly forgotten. A person's experience, however, is a permanent part of him because it has influenced the course of his life. Here is another tip: *try to discover where your pupils are in experience and build on that.* Their experience will provide the best foundation for your teaching. That is your best point of contact with them."

This was an entirely new thought to all five. They sat quietly a few minutes to give it full play in their minds.

"A person's experience is the measure of his ability to understand and assimilate new ideas," Mr. Vinton continued. "This is one of the reasons why there is such a difference in the interest and progress of members of a class. Even though they may be

the same age they are on different levels of experience. It is so important for you to understand this that I am going to ask you to spend the rest of your time this evening in learning how to discover and list experiences children of your acquaintance are having."

"Now we are getting down to brass tacks!" exclaimed Henry.

Mr. Vinton started them off with the name of one child they all knew.

"Let's try our skill on Billy Watson. We all know him, his parents, his neighborhood. Where is he in the kind of experience upon which we can build in a Church School class?"

"His parents are intelligent Church workers," replied Dorothy. "Billy probably knows a lot about the Church and has considerable interest in it. His teacher will have a good solid foundation upon which to build."

"But Billy is an only child," interrupted Sue, "He is likely to be very selfish and accustomed to having his own way. How can any teacher build on that?"

"She can encourage class activities which will give Billy the opportunity to work with a group

of children his own age," answered Jane. "If he doesn't share in the group work properly the others will soon let him know his shortcomings and will refuse to work with him thereafter. He'll be a very lonesome boy!"

"I've seen books of Bible stories when I have been in the Watson home," added Frank. "One book had the finest Bible pictures I've ever seen. No doubt Billy knows more about the Bible than the average child his age. His teacher can help him gain recognition in the class by encouraging him to share his knowledge of the Bible with the others."

"Yes, and he can be encouraged to bring his Bible picture books to class and share them with the others," interrupted Henry. "That will help to cure him of any selfishness which may have developed in his home life."

As the group discussed Billy, Mr. Vinton sat in pleased silence. He was amazed at the speed with which they had caught on and not only diagnosed Billy's life but understood how to make good use of his experiences. When Henry finished what he had to say, Mr. Vinton broke in to suggest the name of another child.

"You've made a very good beginning at trying

to understand Billy in order to make the most of the experiences he is having," he said, "but you must recognize it only as a beginning. You must know a lot more about him before you can minister to his needs. You have only touched upon his experiences in his home. He has many experiences outside the home which are powerful factors in making him what he is. We must take these into account too. But let's try another child. Let's think about Mary Williams. You all know something about her, don't you?"

"I know something about her home life," Dorothy hastened to confess. "Her experience has been just the opposite of Billy's. I'm amazed to learn that she comes to the Church School. She certainly doesn't get any encouragement from her parents."

"Perhaps that will help her develop self-reliance!" exclaimed Sue. "I don't see how her family experiences can give her Church School teacher anything upon which to build."

"Just the same," interrupted Jane, "there must be something. If her parents aren't interested in the Church, why does she come to the Church School? The answer must be—she has a real interest in the Church herself. That gives her teacher the very

best foundation upon which to build—the desire to learn. Remember how important we concluded that was at our second meeting!"

"Perhaps even a better foundation than Billy has with all the advantages in his home!" exclaimed Frank. "At least, I'd rather teach her than Billy. I'd be sure that she didn't know more about the Church than I! And whatever she studied would be new to her."

"But let's remember what Mr. Vinton said about our diagnosis of Billy's experiences and not stick to Mary's home life," interrupted Henry. "She appears to be very popular with the boys and girls of her own age. In fact our children report that she is a leader in her class at school. They say she has ideas. What about this?"

"Knowing that about Mary, her teacher should give her opportunities to use her talent for leadership," observed Jane. "Mary would be the one to fall back on when the others were unable to carry on."

"But the teacher would have to be careful not to use Mary's talent on every occasion as an easy way out," cautioned Sue. "That would be detrimental to the proper development of the other

members of the class. Jane was right in stipulating that Mary would be the one to 'fall back on.' We must always keep that in mind in dealing with children like Mary."

"Come to think of it," interrupted Henry, "our children have reported that Mary is very thoughtful of younger children. She acts as a sort of mother to the little ones in the neighborhood. It would be helpful to a teacher to know that."

"It certainly would," Dorothy broke in. "If Mary were in my class, I'd encourage her to help the ones who were slow in the class activities. That would be a safe way to use her ability to lead."

"All that you five have been saying," said Mr. Vinton, "convinces me that you have grasped the idea of making the most of the children's experiences. But there is one other type of experience you should consider. Let's think about Jimmy Wist."

"Who in the world is he?" asked Frank. "I never heard of anyone by that name."

"Nor I," echoed Henry.

The women knew no more about Jimmy than the men.

"But you will have children just like Jimmy in

your classes," warned Mr. Vinton. "What are you going to do about them? Are you going to ignore them?"

"We can't do that," replied Jane. "We'll have to discover some way to find out what experiences he is having. We might call on his mother. That would give us some insight into his home life. If his mother would, she could give us a lot of helpful information."

"That's all right for you women," asserted Frank, "but we men haven't time to do that kind of calling. We're busy downtown all day."

"Visit in the evening then," suggested Sue. "At that time you could see both mother and father. You're finding time Tuesday evenings to come to these meetings."

"Sue is right," admitted Henry. "An evening call is perhaps better than one in the daytime. But I think we can learn a lot right in the class if we keep our eyes, ears, and minds open. At the very first session of the class we might have an experience meeting, encouraging the class to talk about the things they like most to do, what they don't like to do, who their friends are and how much they know about the subject for the coming year."

"Now there's something to think about!" exclaimed Mr. Vinton. "I can't think of any better way to start off with a group."

"I have one more suggestion," interrupted Dorothy. "It just occurred to me that we could get the best kind of information from Jimmy's public school teachers. Most of them would be glad to tell about the Jimmies we didn't know."

The group had become so interested in this diagnosis that the hour was over before they realized it. When Mr. Vinton finally called attention to the time he said, "Tonight I shall not forget to give you something to think about during the week. We have become very much interested in our pupils. Can we help them most by giving them an active or a passive part in the class work?"

"You certainly know how to whet our appetites," confessed Jane. "Now I'll be looking forward to next Tuesday to learn how well I can answer your question."

"You'll be amazed at what you discover," promised Mr. Vinton.

5

A CONTRIBUTING MEMBER

M R. VINTON hurried to the door of his study the following Tuesday evening as the doorbell rang insistently. When he opened the door Dorothy and Frank stepped into the room.

"I guess we are somewhat early," Dorothy said rather apologetically.

"That's a good habit to form," exclaimed Mr. Vinton. "I wish everyone would err on the early side in going to meetings. I'm very much irked by the many people who regularly waste my time by being late for appointments! They're stealing from me just as truly as if they were taking money out of my pocket!"

Just as he said this the doorbell rang again. When he opened the door the second time the three other members of the group greeted him.

"It's a good thing for you that you came on time," called Frank. "Mr. Vinton was just labeling

late-comers as thieves and robbers! And I think he is right! And I would have thought so even if you people had been late!"

This sally brought on so much laughter and badinage that Mr. Vinton finally had to remind the group that they were really stealing from themselves by being late in starting their own session. After he had thus called the meeting to order, he asked the group to stand for the opening prayer.

"You will recall," he began after the prayer, "that I asked you to be thinking about the part to be played by the pupil or learner. I did that because teachers are very likely to feel such a heavy responsibility that they think that successful class work depends wholly upon them. At the very outset, all of us ought to realize that the pupil also has a very important role in every class. Here is a significant tip for you: *the more the pupil is encouraged to contribute to the class work the more effective the teaching will be.*"

"That's a new viewpoint to me," exclaimed Sue. "I have always thought of myself as a receiver when I have been a member of a class."

"But every class is a social enterprise," interrupted Mr. Vinton. "Under such circumstances no

one can be just a receiver—at times he must be a giver too."

"If that's the case," said Jane thoughtfully, "every member of a class is really a partner with the teacher and the others. Why, that makes the learner somebody! My self-respect has gone up 100 per cent in the last few minutes!"

"That's a good point," exclaimed Henry. "Now we don't need to bow so low before Mr. Vinton. After all, we're doing something in this class! He's not the whole show!"

"Indeed, you are doing something!" exclaimed Mr. Vinton. "And I'm very glad to take my proper place as one member of the group—the leader and guide, to be sure, because I've already been along the way the class is headed."

"And that's what we will be when we become teachers," affirmed Frank, "partners in a social enterprise but guides for those who have never been along the way before. Maybe sometimes we, too, will get into new country and have to walk right along with the others to discover the way."

"Frank, you are picturing teaching exactly as I see it," interrupted Mr. Vinton. "Unless our teaching is regularly opening doors into new under-

standings, appreciations, attitudes, and skills it is not as effective as it can be. Education is a conducted tour into regions of experience unexplored hitherto by the *learners*. That's why I get all out of patience with those teachers who try to do all the exploring themselves and then come back to *tell* the class what they have seen."

"A lot of teachers do that, though," asserted Jane. "They have all the fun. Then they wonder why the boys and girls lose interest. We have some like that in our public schools. And some of the parents think they are wonderful teachers—they know so much!"

"They don't know enough to keep quiet and give the boys and girls the opportunity of doing some discovering for themselves," said Mr. Vinton testily. "If the teacher does all the exploring, the pupil is being deprived of his rights. I wish that all learners in classes like that would revolt and refuse to go to school till their teachers respected their rights! But, of course, that wouldn't be right either!"

"Mr. Vinton, you really have convictions on that point, haven't you!" asserted Henry. "All of

us must remember this when we take on our teaching job or we'll soon be in your bad graces!"

Mr. Vinton let Henry's statement stand. All of them were busy with their own thoughts for a few minutes. Finally, Mr. Vinton broke the silence by saying, "Let's always remember that every learner is a pioneer in a social enterprise as well as a partner. Let's make it our first concern as teachers to lead the boys and girls into new lands but to give them every opportunity of doing as much exploring as they can by themselves."

"If the pupil is a pioneer and a partner," said Jane, "he surely ought to have something to say about the planning of the class work. I suppose the teacher should be the kind of guide you have been and the pupils have as much to say as we have had. Following your example we should encourage the pupils to take as large a part as they can."

"That brings another picture to my mind," interrupted Frank. "Maybe a class is like a law firm in which there are a number of partners. The partners are the board of directors. Each pupil is a director: he shares in the planning and in setting the direction of the group work. The teacher is the chairman of the board because of his experience."

"This all sounds very fine," exclaimed Sue, "but it seems to me that we are getting back into all the evils of the extremists in the progressive education movement. We are making the learner so important that there will be no living with him! He'll run away with the class! The teacher will be following the boys and girls in fruitless wandering instead of leading them into new and invigorating experiences."

"That's a good point, Sue," acknowledged Mr. Vinton. "I suppose that is one of the great dangers in all democratic procedures. In our class work we must always keep it in mind but in the interest of effective teaching we must be ready to run the risk."

"There is little danger if both teacher and pupils respect one another's rights," asserted Dorothy. "Mr. Vinton is certainly giving us plenty of opportunity to express ourselves but we aren't trying to take things into our own hands. We see this class as a co-operative effort."

"A real social enterprise!" interrupted Henry. "Teacher and class are coworkers. As long as they proceed as such, then everything will work out all right. I guess it is one of our first jobs to help the

boys and girls realize that we are all working together to accomplish something worth while."

"Quite often in a partnership one member is a silent partner," exclaimed Frank. "The pupil isn't ever that kind of partner, is he? He has a voice which we must encourage him to use."

"That's right," echoed Mr. Vinton. "The pupil must be a self-reliant personality as far as the class work goes."

This statement brought on considerable discussion. Sue was still concerned about the emphasis upon the pupil. She was not completely convinced that it contributed to healthy group work. Most of the others believed that there was no real danger if the teacher could help the group develop a sense of working together toward a definite goal. But all were glad that Sue had raised the question. Because of her questionings they would seek to develop in each class a mutual self-respect on the part of the pupils and teacher. They were now always talking in terms of "their" classes. They appeared to take it for granted that they were going to teach. Mr. Vinton noted this but kept discreetly quiet about it, though he began unconsciously to reflect their attitude. When the discussion began to quiet down

somewhat he said, "Since the pupil is such an important person, he shares in the responsibility for the successful development of the class."

"He can certainly make or break the group work," affirmed Henry. "In one of my classes in public school there was a boy who was constantly making trouble for the teacher and keeping the room in turmoil. He was too smart for our class. But the next year he became a star pupil."

"What changed him?" asked Dorothy.

"Maybe his new teacher gave him something extra to do," suggested Mr. Vinton.

"Come to think of it, that's just what happened," replied Henry thoughtfully. "I've always wondered about it. Mr. Vinton, I believe that's the explanation. He became our expert on map-making. He disturbed one class. The very next year he helped very much to make the class work a success because he was given something important to do. Yes, sir—that's the answer!"

"We must realize, too," asserted Mr. Vinton, "that the pupil is the greatest gainer if he helps the class work to go well and the principal loser if he doesn't."

"Then we must tell our pupils that," said Frank.

"Perhaps it will make them more ready to co-operate."

"I don't think that it will do a bit of good to tell them," objected Dorothy. "We will have to find some other way to make them realize it."

"You're right," said Jane. "I think we will have to practice very faithfully what we believe about their place in the class work. If we show respect for them and are careful to point out how any of their activities have contributed to the success of the group's work, they will naturally fall into their rightful place. And it will be much better for them to find it out through actual class work rather than by being told."

"And you are right, too," affirmed Mr. Vinton. "It will not be necessary to tell your pupils that they are partners, pioneers, directors, or coworkers if you actually make them so. The atmosphere of the class will be fragrant with mutual self-respect. Without a word's being said, the pupils will take their places and unconsciously recognize their responsibility for the successful development of the class work. Besides, if any member fails to recognize this the other boys and girls will tell him about it—you won't have to say a word."

With that final statement Mr. Vinton called attention to the passage of time. As he prepared to bid them good-night and give them something to think about during the week, Jane asked, "Isn't it about time for us to be discussing what we want to accomplish through our teaching?"

"I've been wondering about that too," affirmed Henry.

"All right," replied Mr. Vinton, "let's do that. At the next meeting let's try to decide what goals we want to set for our teaching. In what direction do we want to help the boys and girls to develop?"

6

GOAL AHEAD

WHEN the group gathered the next Tuesday Mr. Vinton reminded them of the question they had decided to consider during the week.

"Every wise person," he began, "tries to get a sense of direction before he starts on some new venture. He asks himself what he expects to accomplish. This is especially necessary in doing an effective job of teaching. As the class guide, the teacher must know very definitely what course he wants the group to follow and what goals he wants them to try to reach. What goals do we think our boys and girls should reach?"

"I think we ought to be trying all the time to help boys and girls become better Christians," Frank volunteered.

"With that all of us will agree," interrupted Dorothy. "But what do we mean when we say that we want to help them become better Chris-

tians? That's the question which has been puzzling me all week."

"I've been thinking about that, too," confessed Jane. "We must have specific goals. One way to help them become better Christians is to help them to walk closer to God. I have concluded that that's one of the main things I want to try to do."

"Besides that, there is need of a lot of improvement in the every-day relations among people," reported Henry. "I suppose we ought also to say exactly what we mean by that. I think Jane is right. We must be quite specific. Loving one's neighbor must be made very definite. And it has a much richer meaning for older boys and girls than it has for kindergarten children."

"These are two very important goals," interrupted Mr. Vinton. "But before listing others we should do just what you say—be specific about these two. They sound to me very much like Jesus' summary of the Law. Maybe these are the two great general goals. What do we mean by a closer walk with God? That's a fine phrase from a good old hymn, but its meaning may not be at all clear. We use a lot of good phrases whose real meanings may be very vague to us."

All the group sat thinking for several minutes after this statement by Mr. Vinton. Each one was busy trying to formulate the answer to the question. They quickly discovered that they had very hazy ideas about the meaning of the phrase. Finally, Sue ventured an opinion.

"Well," she said, "I think that we want the boys and girls to come to feel that God is their heavenly Father with whom they may talk as freely as they do with their parents and that He is even more ready to help and guide them."

"A recognition that God has a share in everything in their lives," asserted Frank. "Then their walk will be close to God. We ought to help them develop that kind of relationship to God."

"That certainly should be our first aim," affirmed Jane. "To accomplish it, even in a small way, will be a big job in itself."

As the magnitude of this one goal dawned upon them, the group again lapsed into silence. What they recognized as the first essential for effective teaching of Christianity appeared so far beyond their ability that it seemed useless to go on with their preparation. Mr. Vinton sensed this feeling. Finally he broke the silence.

"It is a big job," he said. "It would be quite impossible to reach the goal if you had to depend wholly upon yourselves. But you don't have to do so. You can get the necessary help from God for the asking. And you must do much more asking Him than actually preparing yourselves in other ways. I'm glad the discussion has given me the opportunity to say this. One of the most important tips I have for you is this: *pray often for your class and ask God constantly to show you how to increase your teaching skill.*"

"Thank you, Mr. Vinton, for reminding us of that," said Jane. "We so easily forget that we can expect great help from God as we try to do His will."

"We'll need God's help just as much as we try to lead boys and girls into right Christian relations with others," added Henry. "What a big job that is we can understand when we recall that the whole Church has been trying to do that very thing for almost twenty centuries and still has a long way to go."

"That's because it's one thing to know what we ought to do," interrupted Dorothy, "and something else again to apply what we know. We must

do more than have the girls and boys learn about the Christian way—we must see that they have opportunities of putting their religion into practice right in the class or the Church School or their homes."

"We will do that if we choose the right kinds of activities," Frank reminded the group. "In a sense, our choice of situations in which the class can apply Christian principles will be the most important part of our teaching. It will help them to develop initiative to live as Christians."

"Such activities will also help them to understand more fully the scope and meaning of the Christian religion," interrupted Sue. "That certainly should be one of our aims. Lots of Christians fail to grasp the world-viewpoint of their religion. We must show how the Christian religion is at work in all parts of the world on world-problems."

"Christianity is certainly a fearless religion!" exclaimed Jane. "All of us Christians ought to get very excited about that! Why, the Christian Church tackles problems which the strongest governments try to sidestep!"

"The Christian Church does all this because of God's high regard for all mankind," Mr. Vinton

reminded them. "God so loved the world that He gave His Son. In these days one of our goals should be to help boys and girls realize how much God loves people. And it is just as important for them to learn to show a similar high regard for all God's children everywhere. We ought to stress this point, particularly, in order to help to solve the inter-racial problems which have been plaguing the world all these years."

"Yes, and such high regard for others," affirmed Dorothy, "will lead to a real respect for the abilities and accomplishments of other people of whatever race or color. That's the way Christians ought to be."

"I think we have been talking all around one of the most important goals," asserted Jane. "Last Sunday Mr. Vinton told us that loyalty to Jesus Christ was the very foundation of the Christian religion. Since that is the case, we teachers must try to lead boys and girls into such a vital relationship to Christ. That must be a primary goal in all our teaching—not just loyalty to our Church but loyalty to Christ as the head and chief corner-stone, as Mr. Vinton said."

"We took that for granted when we spoke of

the other goals," argued Sue. "In fact, all the other goals presuppose loyalty to Christ."

"True enough," interrupted Mr. Vinton, "but Jane is right in insisting on loyalty to Christ as a very definite goal of all Christian teaching. Most people would call it the primary goal from which all the others stem. I agree with them. I believe that, if we can lead boys and girls into real loyalty to Jesus Christ, then they will love God and their neighbors even as Jesus did. They will be of the same mind as He in all their relationships."

This statement brought silence again upon the group. It set them to thinking about their own lives and to wondering how they could lead others into a loyalty when their own lives fell short of the goal they were setting. Finally, Henry voiced what was in the minds of the others.

"Good teachers must first of all be good Christians. I am beginning to realize that one very important step in preparing to teach Christianity is to become better Christians ourselves. Our discussion this evening has set me to thinking a lot about my own need of learning. For me to teach is like one blind man's trying to lead another."

"Such humility is refreshing," exclaimed Mr.

Vinton with a smile, "and becomes all of us. But if Christians waited till they had perfected their Christianity there would be no teachers. One of the amazing discoveries you will make is that you will learn much more about Christianity as a Church School teacher than you could by sitting in a class. In most cases the teacher learns more than the pupils. Both unconsciously and deliberately you will begin to practice what you teach."

"Setting these goals for our teaching," affirmed Sue, "ought to spur us on to try to reach them ourselves. Certainly the better Christians we are, the greater will be our influence for Christianity among our pupils. Example has more influence than precept, I have been told."

"We need to pray not only for our class," said Henry, "but also for ourselves. We'll need to know our Bibles, too. By the way, that's a goal for our teaching, too, isn't it? We will want the boys and girls to know their Bibles so well that they will be able to turn to the proper places for help in times of doubt."

"We will want them to know how to worship intelligently," Dorothy reminded them. "Such an

understanding and appreciation of worship will help them into a closer walk with God."

"Yes, and the girls and boys ought to know the reason for all the customs and the meaning of all the symbols used in the Church's services," added Sue. "You can't feel at home in church unless you do know them."

"Since Dorothy and Sue have reminded us of the importance of worship and of feeling at home in it," interrupted Mr. Vinton, "I want to remind you that familiarity with the hymns is necessary for the full enjoyment of worship. So often people have said to me that they get the most out of the service when they know and love the hymns. We ought to find ways to teach the hymns—something more than just singing the best ones each Sunday."

"The more we discuss goals the more difficult the teaching job appears to be!" exclaimed Frank. "But while we are talking about what we want the girls and boys to learn, I am reminded that I have often felt the need of knowing more about the history of the Church. If the best way to learn is to teach, then I ought to teach a course on Church history! I'm sure that the boys and girls ought to

know quite a bit about the Church to which they belong."

"We want them not only to know about their Church but also to share fully in its life," affirmed Jane. "If the Church is to continue to be a force for good in the world, then the boys and girls of today will have to be the Church workers of tomorrow. We want to start them on the way."

"Well, you people have certainly given a full answer to the question Jane raised at the last meeting," said Mr. Vinton. "And in answering it, you have set a very high standard for yourselves. I don't think that it is any too high but you will have to be on your toes all the time in order to reach it. I believe that all of you are ready to make the effort."

"We shall do our best," promised Henry.

The others nodded assent.

"Now, before we close this session," continued Mr. Vinton, "let me give you something to think about during the week. Every workman must have tools for his work. There are tools for teaching too. The teacher's manual is one. What others are there? You will be amazed to discover how much help there is for teachers. Think about it and find out what you can during the week."

7

HELPS FOR YOU

AS SOON as the meeting was opened the next Tuesday evening Sue asked, "When are we going to get a look at some of the courses we may be called upon to teach? At the close of the meeting last week the teacher's manual was mentioned. I'd like to have a peek into one of the manuals."

"Now that you have mentioned this," replied Mr. Vinton, "I'll give each one of you samples of the two kinds of courses used in most schools. They are called units of work and workbooks."

Immediately Mr. Vinton went to his small bookcase and brought back five booklets and five larger books with small procedure guides.

"These are the units," he said as he passed out the booklets. "And these are the workbooks," he continued, as he gave each one a copy of the larger book with the procedure guide.

"Are we to talk about these tonight?" asked Henry.

"No," replied Mr. Vinton, "just take them home with you and examine them as carefully as you have time to do during the week. Tonight we will try to become acquainted with those helps which are not so self-evident and are therefore often neglected."

"At one of our recent sessions some one said that the Chinese reckoned a picture to be worth a thousand words," Frank hastened to remind them. "I got to thinking about that statement. We ought to use all kinds of pictures if they are as good as that."

"What do you mean by all kinds of pictures?" Dorothy wanted to know.

"Well, during the war both Army and Navy made wide use of motion pictures to speed up the training. That's one kind of picture which could be of great help to us."

"The public schools have been using slides for many years," interrupted Jane. "What our children read in their books and hear in their classes they also see pictured on the screen. The picture thus reinforces the other helps to learning."

"Both of these kinds of pictures are very useful," said Mr. Vinton, "but let's not forget the flat pictures about which the Chinese were talking. Those can be used without expensive machinery. Children are glad to look at them, too. Such vital aids have the advantage of being available for more leisurely study and discussion than even slides or film-strips. Besides, there is a greater variety."

"How can such pictures be used to best advantage?" asked Frank.

"They may be shown to a class to stimulate interest in an incident which is to be discussed, or to emphasize the point and provide atmosphere while the incident is being described and discussed, or to raise questions after the incident has been told. In addition, a picture may be used for its artistic worth—as the basis for a discussion of the methods the artist employed to bring out the important point in the incident."

"I suppose we can get these flat pictures at Church bookstores," suggested Sue. "But where can we find suitable slides and movies? I have never even heard of real religious movies."

"There is a good catalog containing titles and some description of available religious movies and

stills," replied Mr. Vinton. "This list is prepared for the Religious Film Association. Many of the pictures are reviewed and evaluated by committees from the International Council of Religious Education. You can order the films or slides through your own Church headquarters."

"I can understand the use of flat pictures and even slides," affirmed Dorothy, "but I don't quite see how to use movies."

"This way: suppose the class needed to understand one of the Bible stories. The story could be read and discussed one Sunday. The next Sunday the movie could be shown and the story discussed again in the light of what was shown on the screen. Here's a tip: *a movie may have value either as the opening gun in a discussion or as a pleasant summary.* One of its greatest values is that it brings the imagination into play."

This statement brought on further discussion of the use of both still and motion pictures. One of the very practical results was the decision to start collecting flat pictures for use in teaching the selected courses. Mr. Vinton promised that the Church School would provide all the pictures needed. Something else which grew out of the discussion

was the recognition of the need of a room where moving pictures or slides could be shown. Henry and Frank agreed to look around the parish house and church basement for any available space which could be made into such a room. Mr. Vinton also promised to call the vestry's attention to the need for such a room and two kinds of projectors. The reference to the projection room brought up the whole question of classrooms and their importance.

"Plenty of room is one of the things classes need most," said Jane. "Each class should have a room of its own just as in the public schools. How can we carry on such activities as games unless we have our own rooms?"

"When our parish house was built years ago, people didn't feel the need for separate classrooms," explained Mr. Vinton. "We'll have to do the best we can with what we have. With screens for each class, the pupils cannot see one another and be distracted by what others are doing. One factor very much in our favor is the small number of pupils our teachers are called upon to teach."

"Well, if we cannot have rooms of our own," asserted Frank, "maybe we can find some place

around the parish house which we can fix up as a special activity room."

"At last summer's Church Conference there was that kind of workshop, as they called it," interrupted Mr. Vinton. "I had completely forgotten about it until Frank mentioned it just now. I recall how impressed I was with it at the Conference. If we are going to carry on class activities, perhaps a workshop is really needed more than the projection room right now. And we may be able to provide the workroom right away."

"Our speaking about rooms," said Henry, "reminds me that another very necessary and helpful tool would be something like a library containing helps for teachers. A little while ago we were talking about flat pictures. The pictures ought to be kept on hand in one place where we could find them whenever we needed them—perhaps in a file. We might even buy slides and film-strips and keep them in the same kind of place."

"Yes, and we ought to have some attractive picture-books for the small children," added Sue. "The public schools have them. I think that children can learn as much through attractive readers as they do in a class, maybe more in some cases."

"Teachers of the younger children often display such books on browsing tables, as they call them," interrupted Mr. Vinton. "When the children come early to Church School they go to the table to look at the books instead of running around and creating a disturbance."

"A library ought to have books for us to read, too," affirmed Jane. "We ought to have extra source books handy. If I have to teach a course on the Bible, I'll certainly need books to help me understand the Bible. I know very little about it now."

"Yes, and I'll need to read books about children and about teaching," added Frank. "When I take a class, I'll need all that kind of help I can get."

"I can't think of anything of greater help to us in our teaching than a Church School library," affirmed Dorothy.

"We have the beginnings of one," stated Mr. Vinton, "but we'll need to add a lot to it before it becomes as efficient a help as it can be. If we all keep talking about it and trying to get additions to it, it will soon become a reality. I believe that all our parish organizations will help us build it up when we show them how much we need it."

"Last week, when I was trying to think of all the helps," interrupted Henry, "teachers in the public schools kept coming to mind. They are in a different class from pictures or browsing tables or a library but just the same they can help us a lot. All the problems we'll have are probably old stuff to them. I imagine they know most of the answers."

"That gives me an idea!" exclaimed Sue. "I believe that it would be a good thing to visit classes in the public schools to observe how good teachers carry on the class work. If I were teaching a fourth grade in Church School, the thing for me to do would be to visit the room of the best fourth grade teacher in our public schools."

"That's done by young men and women learning to be public school teachers," observed Mr. Vinton. "If they find it helpful, we should too."

"That reminds me of something else," Dorothy hastened to add. "A few days ago I saw a public school teacher taking her class to the museum. Evidently the children were studying about the American Indians. Maybe we could find institutions in the community from which we could get similar help."

"Church School teachers have taken their classes

to visit other Christian churches or the Jewish synagogue to get first-hand information," affirmed Mr. Vinton.

"We should try our public library, too," volunteered Frank. "It might have books which either the children or we could use to advantage."

"I heard someone at the PTA meeting say that our library has good collections of flat pictures to loan," said Jane. "There might be some we could use in the Church School."

"There are probably many other ways in which our public library can be helpful," added Mr. Vinton. "It may well be one of the greatest helpers we can find in our community."

"We have certainly uncovered many sources of help this evening," asserted Sue. "This discussion ought to be a good foundation for the examination of our course books."

"That reminds me of something I want to say about the books I gave you a little while ago," said Mr. Vinton. "As you examine them, be sure to write down any questions which come to your minds. The workbooks will appear easy to use, the units a little more difficult. As you read, try to imagine yourself actually meeting with a group of

boys and girls whom you want to encourage to share as much as possible in the class work. This will give you a good basis for your questions and your estimation of the materials."

8

PLANNING TOGETHER

WHEN the group assembled the next Tuesday evening in Mr. Vinton's study, the members began at once to talk about the teaching guides he had given them for study during the week. Mr. Vinton had to call them to order so that the meeting could be opened with prayer. Immediately following the prayer, the group began reporting the results of the study of the materials. Jane was particularly impressed with the possibilities presented in the units, while Frank liked the workbooks better. Jane, however, was so enthusiastic that she succeeded in directing discussion first toward the units.

"I followed the proper procedure one of my college professors always suggested regarding reading assignments," she reported. "I read the whole unit through quickly in order to get an overview of it. Then I read it again more carefully. I was par-

ticularly delighted with the clear statement of purpose. This showed me quickly why the unit had been written."

"I found the statement of the outcomes very helpful in the same way," interrupted Henry. "They indicate what the teacher may hope to accomplish if the unit is developed properly."

"The list of children's experiences showed that the unit was suited to the age group," added Dorothy, "and could enrich some of the children's every-day experiences. That list gave me confidence in the choice of the unit for the group."

"None of you has mentioned what I consider one of the most valuable features of a unit," affirmed Mr. Vinton. "One of the greatest needs of the teacher is to secure the co-operation of the parents. The introduction to each unit contains suggestions—practical ones—of ways by which that co-operation can be secured. Be sure to read this section carefully before you begin a unit."

"In the unit I read," said Sue, "the activities suggested appeared to be quite suitable to the boys and girls who were expected to use them. On the whole I thought that they were very well chosen. But many of them could not be used in our school be-

cause we haven't separate classrooms. That was one of the questions which came to my mind as I read my unit."

"And that's a real problem for teachers in our school," acknowledged Mr. Vinton. "We certainly will have to keep that in mind when we try to use units. It means that we will be limited in our choice of activities to those we can use around tables."

"Maybe we can cut down the limitations by asking the boys and girls to do some of the necessary things at home," suggested Frank. "Or they might be willing to stay a little longer on Sunday mornings and work when they will not be disturbing the others and can have more room."

"Yes, that is a possibility," said Mr. Vinton, "but I believe that we will discover that we can use most of the activities we want. The boys and girls are very ingenious when they really want to be. If we give them their share in the planning they'll find ways to carry on which we probably would never have thought of suggesting."

"Among the most important activities listed were those suggested for developing the initial interest of the class," Jane reported. "In the unit I examined,

the suggestions were most practical. To make a subtle beginning such as was indicated is much more effective than to announce what the unit is about and expect the children to be interested immediately. When the children are shown pictures of Jesus they will want to hear stories about Him and want to study about Him without any urging."

"I think that those called culminating activities," interrupted Henry, "are just as important. One of the things about these units that I liked most was the plan to gather up what had been learned by the class and invite the parents in to see what had been accomplished. I suppose some of the parents will not take the trouble to come but those who do will be a great encouragement to the teacher and pupils. It is really such a natural way to do. When a child makes anything around the home he is very anxious to show his parents what a wonderful thing he has done."

"One of the weak spots about the unit I had," interrupted Frank, "was the helps for the teacher. There were very few stories and there was a long list of books which I had never heard of before. If a teacher has to read all those books he'll have to

spend a lot of time in preparation. There ought to be more help right in the unit."

"The more a teacher is spoon-fed the less of his own ability he makes use of," explained Mr. Vinton. "Let's always remember that the teacher isn't expected to gather all the information and pass it on to the class. Where research is necessary beyond what is provided in the unit, the teacher can bring the book or books to class and let the boys or girls find the information for themselves. The units provide a minimum of information in order to compel the teacher to allow the pupils to share more fully in the search."

"That's the ideal," exclaimed Sue, "but most teachers will be afraid to use the units because the helps are so skimpy. I agree with Frank right now. Perhaps if I get up enough courage to try a unit and quickly learn how to use one I will soon lose all fear of a lack of material, but right now I haven't quite enough confidence in myself. The units appeal to me in spite of my scepticism about activities, but I wish that there were more helps for beginners such as I."

"I'm not worried about the lack of informative material," volunteered Jane. "I'm wondering

whether there will be time to accomplish what is suggested in the session plans. Activities take a lot of time. I like the apparent skimpiness for the very reason Mr. Vinton gave—it gives the teacher a greater opportunity to use her own imagination."

This statement brought on considerable discussion about the session plans. Some of the group felt as Jane did, but Frank and Sue continued to feel that the teacher needed more help than was given in most of the session plans. Mr. Vinton told of a meeting he had attended in which one of the speakers had said that even well-trained public school teachers had been insistent in their demands for more help; this insistence had resulted in more than doubling the size of the teaching guides in the second edition. The discussion brought out the fundamental differences in the attitudes of the members of the group—some wanted to be left more to their own ingenuity, others wanted more detailed direction.

"I guess we cannot reach any single conclusion about the session plans," Mr. Vinton said. "Anyway, we have given them full discussion and know exactly where we stand. Now let's spend some time on general procedures in the development of a unit

even though some of us apparently will prefer to use workbooks. Let's suppose we were given a unit to use with a group. Let's assume that we have read it as carefully as we read those I gave you last Tuesday. How should we go about our preparation for the first session? What would be the first step to take?"

"I would decide upon some activity by which to enlist the initial interest of the boys and girls," asserted Jane. "I would plan it very carefully so that the pupils would have the feeling that the study arose out of their normal desire for it."

"Exactly right!" exclaimed Mr. Vinton. "That is the very first step—to secure, if possible, the initial interest of the group."

"Then I would select from the activities suggested in the unit," added Dorothy, "the two or three most suited to the abilities and interests of the members of the class. I would be prepared to present them to the class at the proper time."

"These may be first steps for some of us," interrupted Sue, "but I would first of all want to line up sources of information for class work before I did anything else. I would want to have a look at as many of the source materials as possible."

"I think that that is important too," acknowledged Henry, "but for me it would come later. If we are going to let the group enter fully into all the planning, then we will not know exactly what we will need in the way of information till the class plans have been completed. And then our job will be to guide the boys or girls to the sources instead of doing the exploring ourselves."

"Now let's suppose," said Mr. Vinton, "that we have made all the preparation necessary for the first session and that we are actually meeting with our class for the first time. What should we do?"

"I should want to give some time to general conversation just to get to know the members of the class," replied Frank. "I'd try to find out what they were interested in, both in school and in play, where they lived, and what they were studying in school. I'd also tell them about my interests, where I lived and what I did for a living. In this way I'd hope to make them feel at home in the class and get rid of formality just as soon as possible."

"That's a good way to begin," affirmed Jane. "Then I'd try to work right into the unit by means of the activity I had chosen to enlist the interest of the group at the very beginning."

"I'm sure we'd all agree on those steps," interrupted Dorothy. "Then we'd be ready to begin class planning. After the group had shown a desire to go ahead with the development of the unit, we'd talk together about ways to proceed."

"Right here I'd like to give you another tip," Mr. Vinton hastened to say. "*In order to make your planning very definite, the group should decide upon the things to be done every day during the development of the unit.* I like to call this the making of a worksheet. It will not only keep the class right on the track but will also be a rod by which to measure progress. Before every session the class can consult the worksheet to see how well they are keeping to schedule. The worksheet does not need to be followed so slavishly that no changes in the plan can be made."

"Among other things, the worksheet will list the activity or activities selected, won't it?" asked Dorothy.

"Yes, it will even go into some detail about the way the chosen activity is to be carried on. It will provide a tentative step-by-step plan for the activity—where to get the materials necessary to carry it on, what information each one is to search for,

what part each member of the class is to have in the development of the activity."

"Will the worksheet also indicate the closing or culminating activity?" asked Sue.

"In most cases, no. The culminating activity should grow naturally out of the development of the unit. It will be decided upon, generally, two or three sessions before the unit is completed. By that time the pupils can decide upon the best way to gather up what has been learned and share it with their parents or others."

"We indicated how important it is to make a good beginning," said Henry. "It appears to me that it is just as important to have a good ending. We will want the boys and girls to have a very real sense of having done something important and done it well. Then they will be anxious to start another unit. The parents will be interested, too, when they see what their children have accomplished."

"There is just one more procedure we need to keep in mind," volunteered Mr. Vinton. "Let's be sure that the group sets aside time to evaluate the class work. Each unit has some suggestions for this in the Introduction. Such evaluation is a 'must'

for us. It will add greatly to the pupil's feeling that the work is important."

As Mr. Vinton made this statement he looked casually at his wrist watch. As he did so he gave a low whistle. "My, my," he said, "believe it or not, time is up. Where has this evening gone! Well, we'll just have to come back once more. We must talk about how to use workbooks. I'm sure that Sue and Frank will want to share their views and the rest will want to have a say, too. Our assignment for next time will be the strengths and weaknesses of workbooks. We've been quite frank in our discussion of units. I'm expecting a similar frankness in our discussion of the workbooks."

In a short time the meeting broke up and the five learners departed for home. As they walked along to their cars Frank said, "I'll be sorry when our meetings are over. I've really enjoyed our discussions."

"I have, too," affirmed Jane, "but I'm really looking forward to the work with a class. I now understand why Mr. Vinton holds the teacher's work in such high regard. Even though I've still got much to learn, the prospect fascinates me!"

9

JUDGMENT DAY

THE next Tuesday evening, when the group came together in Mr. Vinton's study, Frank said, "I don't believe in saving flowers for funerals! Mr. Vinton, I want to take this opportunity to tell you how much I have enjoyed these meetings. I'll miss this regular get-together with you and the others in our group."

"So say we all!" exclaimed Henry. "We were talking about it as we started for home last Tuesday. We thank you for asking us to meet with you and for opening up this opportunity for service to us."

"And don't you think for one moment that I won't miss you!" responded Mr. Vinton. "One of the great discouragements of the ministry is the lukewarmness of people in the face of the world's need for the Gospel. The contrasted earnestness of you five has banished much of my normal discouragement and the thought of you will keep it from

overwhelming me in the future. You have been a strengthening tonic to me. I'm glad to learn that we have helped one another."

Without further ado Mr. Vinton called them to prayer and then opened the meeting for discussion.

"Sue, you or Frank should start our discussion this evening," he said, "since you two appeared to be the champions of the workbooks at our last meeting."

Sue and Frank looked at one another.

"Naturally, I defer to Sue," Frank hastened to say with a smile.

"Well, then," she said, "if I must open the subject, I'll say that I prefer workbooks to units because they appear to me to be easier to use. The teacher is given more definite directions. As I have said before, until I have gained more confidence in myself I'll need lots of directions. Maybe I'll always need them."

"I'm unable to discover very much difference between the units and the workbooks I've seen," volunteered Frank, "except in the way they are put together and the book for the pupil. They do not look at all alike but the principle of pupil participation is anticipated in both. In the intro-

ductory section of each the teacher is urged to give the boys and girls just as much opportunity to take part in the work as possible. What the boys or girls write in the workbook is the result of class discussion or planning, not what the teacher suggests. I'll admit that the teacher will always be tempted to dictate but that may happen in a unit too."

"My principal objection to a workbook," asserted Jane, "is its very definiteness. That would cramp my style! Besides, I think that a workbook is much more difficult to use educationally than most people realize. I'd be afraid that I'd be patting myself on the back just because the boys and girls had filled in all the blank spaces properly."

"The very fact that you recognize those dangers," interrupted Mr. Vinton, "would enable you to use a workbook wisely! Workbooks can be used educationally by those who know the weaknesses and are determined to avoid them. Some teachers can do a better job of teaching with workbooks than they can with units. Some children respond better to workbooks."

"The workbook is really a worksheet prepared ahead of time rather than by the group at its first or second meeting, isn't it?" asked Dorothy.

"That's the way it appears to me, too," affirmed Henry. "Yet the better types of workbooks do suggest so much more than can be accomplished at any one session that the class really does have an opportunity to select and do its own planning."

"There are strengths and weaknesses in each kind of study material," explained Mr. Vinton. "My tip to you is this: *examine different kinds of study material carefully until you find the kind in which you feel most at home.* If you are determined to do so, you can use democratic procedures in your class regardless of the materials. The course can never be more than a tool. The teacher determines its utility."

"We've talked a great deal about units and workbooks," said Dorothy. "Are they the only kinds of available material? I'm quite satisfied with them but I'm just curious."

"No, there are other kinds," replied Mr. Vinton, "but those two are the most widely used at the present time. Some teachers, however, prefer to build their own courses around books which can serve as readers for the pupils. The chapters in such books are each read and discussed for one or more sessions."

"That would call for an experienced teacher, wouldn't it?" asked Sue. "I should think, too, that such a course would be limited to older boys and girls who could read well."

"Yes, to your question," replied Mr. Vinton. "And you're right—such a procedure is limited to older groups. But there are other courses which use the readers but give the teachers very definite help in the use of them. Many of the annual mission study courses are organized in that way for juniors as well as for Junior high."

As he said this Mr. Vinton walked over to the bookcase and took out several books. One of them he passed over to Sue.

"Here is a sample of the kind of book which may be used as the basis for a course, *The Church of Our Fathers*," he continued. "And here are a reader and a guide for a mission study course for juniors." He put them in Henry's hands. "And here is a discussion course containing a series of topics suitable for boys and girls of high school age." He passed the last two books over to Dorothy, saying to her as he did so, "I'm glad that you asked your question. I probably would have forgotten to show you these materials."

Jane and Frank looked on with the others. Jane was particularly interested in *The Church of Our Fathers*. Frank moved over beside Dorothy in order to discover what the discussion course was like. Mr. Vinton talked with Henry about the way the mission study reader was used. After sufficient time had been allowed for the books to be passed around and examined, Mr. Vinton called the group to order again.

"If you really want to get a clear idea of the variety of available materials," he said, "I suggest that you go down to some Church bookstore and examine the Church School courses kept in stock. You'll be amazed at the variety. In fact, some people say that that's the trouble—there's so much that it's impossible for the average Church School to make a wise selection."

While he was speaking, Mr. Vinton had taken a quick glance at his wrist watch.

"We have one more job to do," he continued. "Does anyone know what it is?"

There was no response forthcoming, though all five were apparently trying their best to find the answer to the question.

"Well," smiled Mr. Vinton, "shouldn't we eval-

uate our work if we are to be consistent in asking others to do so?"

"To be sure!" exclaimed Henry. "Every one of us should have realized that! Let's see now: we ask ourselves such questions as, what is the most important thing we've learned through our discussions, don't we?"

"Another question," interrupted Sue, "is this: if we had it all to do over again, how would we improve on our first attempt at group thinking?"

"Yes, and we might well ask ourselves," affirmed Dorothy, "in what way or ways we failed to obey the laws of learning as we worked together."

Dorothy's statement apparently touched a sore spot for Mr. Vinton.

"I was greatly at fault during the first sessions," he acknowledged. "I failed to give you people enough opportunity to help in the planning. The first few sessions were too much *my worksheet* and not enough *ours*. My preaching makes it very difficult for me to get away from the lecture method of teaching. Unless I am constantly on my guard I fall into it whenever I face a group."

"Maybe that's true," replied Jane, "but we did our share of talking at every session. I think, how-

ever, that if we were to have the sessions all over again we might try to work out an adult unit together. In that way we could be learning by doing and Mr. Vinton could call attention to his 'tips' as they were brought out in the course of the group's work."

"I have learned so many useful things," confessed Frank, "that it would be hard to mention them all. I give first place to the discovery of how people learn. It seems to me that that is fundamental to everything else."

"The discovery that amazed me," asserted Sue, "was the important role the pupil has in his own learning. I hope that I can help the members of my class take their proper places in the group work."

"What Sue just said," reflected Jane, "shows how differently people react to the same stimulus. We all heard the same things but each one was not affected in the same way. I suppose our pupils will likewise be responding in various ways to our teaching—and some of them probably won't respond at all! What made the most impression on me was the need of being a Christian myself before I can do much real teaching of Christianity."

"Since this is becoming an experience meeting,"

said Dorothy with a smile, "I'd like to confess that I have gained a far greater respect for a Church School teacher's job. I've become quite enthusiastic about trying it myself. That's what our discussions have done for me."

"And I was most impressed with the need for understanding the members of the class," acknowledged Henry. "I suppose this appealed to me because of its practical value to me in my home. Ever since that need was emphasized I have found myself trying to discover the basis for the actions of my own children. In fact, I have become increasingly interested in them just for themselves. This discussion has added meaning to my family life and made me anxious to teach."

"These frank confessions do my heart good!" exclaimed Mr. Vinton. "I'm beginning to think that I'm not such a poor teacher after all! As we have agreed, everything depends upon the teacher. We must keep this constantly in mind. A good teacher can do a good job with a unit or a work-book. A poor teacher cannot do a good job no matter what kind of materials are given to him. Remember this: *the course can never be more than a tool—the teacher is the artist.*"

Mr. Vinton paused for a moment to let this thought sink well into the minds of the group. He had said it before several times in other ways. He believed that their future as teachers depended very largely upon their willingness to adopt it as their own. Once they made it their own they would be ready to use their own imaginations and to scorn all crutches.

"Now, I believe, you have received enough general directions for you to make a good beginning as Church School teachers," he continued. "As you teach you will learn in the very best school—the school of experience. It is a hard school, an exacting school, but a thorough one for people with open minds and a real desire to improve themselves. I'm sure that you five are such people. I'm impressed by your earnestness. Now that we have come to the end of our discussions, have all of you decided to try your hands at teaching in the Church School?"

Every one of the five nodded.

"Then let's go over to the church and dedicate ourselves to the work God has given us to do among His children. If we become successful teachers it will be because we have learned to lean heavily upon Him each day."

APPENDIX

Questions for Discussion on Each Chapter.

CHAPTER 1.

1. What makes a Church School teacher's work so important?
2. How should the teachers be selected?
3. What are some of the qualifications they should have?
4. In what ways can the Church help people become better qualified for teaching?
5. In view of the importance of teaching, what kinds of self-imposed obligations should teachers take upon themselves at the very beginning of their service?

CHAPTER 2.

1. Why is it necessary for teachers to understand how people learn?
2. If Mr. Vinton's group was correct in its analysis of the learning process, what are the chief functions of the teacher?

3. What effect does a teacher's attitude toward a course have on the pupil's desire to learn?
4. Take for consideration some potential Church School course, such as the life of Christ, the Christian Year, or God's World. In what ways can the pupil's initial desire to learn be stimulated?
5. How can the initial desire to learn be maintained?

CHAPTER 3.

1. In what ways have the findings of Mr. Vinton's group given you new insights into ways of teaching?
2. What difference does it make in a teacher's planning if people learn chiefly through their own thinking and doing?
3. List ways other than those discovered in which a teacher can give the pupils opportunities to think and do in connection with the class work.
4. Show how to use the principle of "pupil participation" in the first session of a course on the Christian year.
5. Plan your next session with this principle in mind.

CHAPTER 4.

1. What is the value of a sympathetic understanding of the pupils?
2. Try to discover what the public schools are doing to help teachers understand their pupils.
3. Plan a method of approach to parents in order to get them to talk freely about their children.
4. If children of the same age differ so much from one another, in what ways has a small class advantages over a large one?

CHAPTER 5.

1. How is the teacher's role magnified by a recognition of the important place of the pupil in the group's work?
2. How can the pupils be encouraged to assume their proper place in the work of the group?
3. If the pupils should be allowed to make the discoveries, what difference does this make in the teacher's preparation for the class session?
4. What can the teacher do to maintain a good balance between the contributions of teacher and pupils?

5. How can the teacher make the most of both the failures and the successes of the pupils?

CHAPTER 6.

1. What is there in the work of the class which ministers to a closer walk with God?
2. How can the work in the class contribute to the development of Christian relations with others?
3. What can a teacher do to help the pupils develop loyalty to Christ in their every-day living?
4. Discover or write several prayers for teachers to use in their private devotions.
5. Plan several alternative ways for bringing about the spiritual enrichment of teachers.

CHAPTER 7.

1. List the helps available for teachers in your community and indicate for which age-groups they will be most useful.
2. Discuss your own situation in regard to separate classrooms, a workshop, a projection room, a library, and take steps to improve conditions where the need is greatest.
3. Make a list of other kinds of equipment needed and take steps to secure it.

CHAPTER 8.

1. What is the chief value of a unit?
2. Make a worksheet for the preparation of a map of Palestine by a class of eight boys or six girls. Be sure to provide something for the teacher and each pupil to do.
3. Why is it important for the teacher to recognize the course as nothing more than a tool?

CHAPTER 9.

1. Evaluate your study of this book. What new insights has it given you? What former understandings and appreciations has it strengthened? In what ways does it point to the need for much further study?

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